



My name is Karin Goodell, and I am the Director of the Scoville Memorial Library in Salisbury, CT, and the Region 1

Representative to the Connecticut Library Association. I write to support the proposed legislation to create fair terms and pricing for eBooks and digital audiobooks for libraries.

For the past 16 years, I have worked in small-town, rural libraries in Connecticut. Before coming to Salisbury, I was the Children's Librarian and Director of the Beardsley Library in Winsted. Small libraries in small communities have a plentiful demand to provide access to digital content, yet most of the time very limited budgets to work with. Those already tight budgets are stretched even thinner by the unfair pricing libraries are subject to when purchasing eBooks and downloadable audiobooks for their collections. These types of libraries rely on joining consortia to make lending digital content more affordable. That allows us to give our patrons access, but it's often challenging for people to get the titles they need without very long waiting times because the collection is shared with so many other libraries. Although we have the opportunity to purchase items that are strictly available to our users, the cost of doing that makes it very prohibitive.

For example, we pay approximately \$15.00 for a new hardcover book in print. The SAME book, in digital format, can cost us upwards of \$50.00, with limited terms on its usage on top of that. For electronic audiobooks, it's even more of a dramatic disparity. This directly and negatively impacts taxpayers and is disproportionately unfair to people living in rural areas. They are often the people who need to take advantage of digital content the most due to a number of factors, such as transportation barriers making it difficult for them to get to the library's location.

In Salisbury, we are impacted even further because we have one of the oldest populations, per capita, in the state. Many of our aging patrons prefer eBooks and audiobooks because they can adjust the print size to accommodate vision problems or even listen to books when they can no longer hold a physical book because of an ailment. This is yet another way in which unfair pricing and terms create barriers to access in vulnerable populations.

The sad reality is that our library, and many others like us, cannot afford to pay exorbitant prices to satisfy the demand among our users. No one can. I understand that authors and publishers need to profit from the sale of books. However, as an institution, libraries have been the quintessential promoters of books and interest in reading, thus *helping* their cause. It's time for publishers to create fair pricing and terms for libraries and, ultimately, the taxpayers who are being done a disservice by the current practices. I hope you will support us in this effort.

Sincerely,

Karin Goodell, Director
Scoville Memorial Library